

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9217
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, MV, UN
SUBJECT: COMMENTS BY MALDIVES AMBASSADOR TO THE UN

1. DURING RECENT LUNCH WITH MISSOFF, AMBASSADOR FATHULLA JAMEEL, MALDIVES AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS, COMMENTED ON SEVERAL SUBJECTS AS NOTED BELOW.

2. PEACE CORPS. AMB. WILL BE VISITING HOME CIRCA JAN-FEB AND INTENDS TO TALK WITH MINISTERS OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH ABOUT REQUESTING PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS. EXPERTS WOULD BE USEFUL IN PREPARING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING MATERIALS AND STUDY PROGRAMS. MEDICAL TECHNICIANS AND HEALTH INSTRUCTORS COULD BE HELPFUL, SINCE HEALTH CARE POOR IN OUTER ISLANDS. LIBYANS HAVE OFFERED A SMALL, MEDICALLY EQUIPPED SHIP FOR CALLS AT VARIOUS ATOLLS BUT OPERATING AND MAINTENANCE COSTS HAVE CAUSED MALDIVEANS TO HESITATE.

3. RELATIONS WITH LIBYA. LIBYANS HAVE RECENTLY ESTABLISHED A DIPLOMATIC OFFICE IN MALE, MAKING A TOTAL OF THREE SUCH

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OFFICES. (INDIA AND PAKISTAN ARE OTHERS.) AS A MUSLIM STATE, THE MALDIVES HAS BEEN RECIPIENT OF CONSIDERABLE LIBYAN ATTENTION, BUT JAMEEL SAID HIS GOVERNMENT HAS MADE CLEAR ITS INDEPENDENCE AND NONALIGNED POLICY AND INTENT TO MAKE OWN DECISIONS ON USE OF FOREIGN AID. HE CLAIMED LIBYANS DO NOT PRESS POLITICAL ACTION ON THE MALDIVES AND THAT RELATIONSHIP IS PLEASANT AND FLEXIBLE.

4. BANKING. MALDIVES WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP ITS OWN COMMERCIAL BANKING SYSTEM. INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE INITIATED CIRCA 1972 HAS BEEN OF LIMITED VALUE. INDIA AND PAKISTAN HAVE SET UP COMPETITIVE BANKING ESTABLISHMENTS IN MALE. MALDIVEANS ARE EMPLOYED IN BOTH TO GAIN BANKING EXPERIENCE. SOME MALDIVEAN STUDENTS ABROAD ARE STUDYING ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE, AND IT IS INTENDED TO BUILD A TRAINED CADRE FOR A FUTURE MALDIVEAN BANKING OPERATION.

5. UNDP. DISCUSSIONS WITH UNDP FOR A RESREP IN MALE HAVE BEEN UNSATISFACTORY. UNDP MAINTAINS IT IS TOO COSTLY GIVEN THE SMALL PROGRAM DESIRED BY THE MALDIVE AUTHORITIES. THE MALDIVES INSIST ON SMALL, CAREFULLY CONTROLLED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, CONSERVATIVELY FINANCED AND MANAGED. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS TO BE CAREFULLY THOUGHT OUT, IMPLEMENTED WITH DELIBERATION. THEY INTEND EVENTUALLY TO APPROACH THE WORLD BANK FOR ASSISTANCE.

6. MALDIVE AIRLINES. AN INTERNATIONAL AIRLINE HAS BEEN SET UP WITH ASSISTANCE OF AIR INDIA, WHICH IS FURNISHING PERSONNEL, AIRCRAFT, AND USE OF REPAIR SHOP FACILITIES IN INDIA. AN AGREEMENT WAS WORKED OUT WITH SRI LANKA ON ROUTES AND SERVICING, WHICH IS NOW IN JEOPARDY SINCE SRI LANKA GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATION OF ITS OWN AIRLINE PERSONNEL ON CORRUPTION CHARGES.

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7. COMMUNICATIONS. IN A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RADIO MALDIVE ACTIVITIES, AMB. REMARKED THERE IS SOME DISSATISFACTION AMONG THE PREDOMINANT MUSLIM POPULATION THAT THE RADIO PROGRAMS HAVE A CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY FLAVOUR HE IMPLIED THAT PROGRAMS WOULD HAVE TO BE BROUGHT INTO HARMONY WITH THE MUSLIM CULTURE OF MAJORITY OF LISTENERS. HE ALSO NOTED THAT SOME POPULATION ON OUTER FRINGE ATOLLS (NOT FURTHER IDENTIFIED) REGARD CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AT MALE "WITH SUSPICION, EVEN FEAR".

8. BIO DATA. AMB. JAMEEL'S FATHER IS AN INFLUENTIAL FIGURE IN MALE; HE IS A RETIRED CHIEF JUSTICE AND WELL KNOWN LOCAL POET AND IS A STRONG SUPPORTER OF THE GOVERNMENT MOVE TO ROMANIZE THE MALDIVEAN WRITTEN LANGUAGE.
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